

Documents on Diplomacy: The Source

This Great Political Disease

A Letter from Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr.

London, August 16, 1861

We have now gone through three stages of this great political disease. The first was the cold fit, when it seemed as if nothing would start the country. The second was the hot one, when it seemed almost in the highest continual delirium. The third is the process of waking to the awful reality before it. I do not venture to predict what the next will be. I hope anything but distraction. Thus far the favorable feature has been union. Maintaining that, we can bear a great deal. But unless we can have a principle to contend for, the money question will infallibly shake us to pieces. I am for this reason anxious to grapple with the slave question at once. I wish to settle it in the District of Columbia, to dispose of it prospectively in Maryland, and wherever else we have a hold in the slave states. Money spent in smoothing that road is far better used than in war. It will spread our real strength which mere military supremacy will not. . . .

Source

Ford, Worthington Chauncey, ed. *A Cycle of Adams Letters, 1861-1865*, in two volumes. [Boston: 1920]